

VZCZCXRO0596
OO RUEHDE
DE RUEHAD #3305 2271058
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 151058Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6587
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1093
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RHWSMRC/MCF01 SACC5 USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 003305

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA; INR/B;
RRU-NEA
IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR MCKUNE
PITRANSGRESS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WHO WON THE WAR?

¶1. Summary: One Emirati columnist in "Al-Ittihad" ridiculed declarations that the cease-fire marked a Lebanese victory, and highlighted the heavy losses incurred by Lebanon because of Hezbollah's intransigence. Another columnist in "Al-Khaleej" warned the Lebanese against holding Hezbollah accountable for the recent conflict even after they helped defend Lebanon from Israeli aggression; instead, he urges them to hold Arab impotence accountable. Finally, a lead editorial in "Al-Khaleej" emphasized that the winner of the war was ultimately the Lebanese, and that the freedom they have achieved is worth any price. End Summary.

¶2. On 08/15, Emirati columnist Abdullah Rasheed wrote the following in his daily column in the Abu Dhabi-based semi-official Arabic-language daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"Instead of investigating the catastrophe that has hit our Lebanese brothers and preparing Arabs to accept the reality of this tragedy, some Arab voices have seen fit to declare it an overwhelming military victory for Lebanon over Israel. These Arabs forget that the million Israelis that have spent the past several weeks in shelters will tomorrow or the day after return to their homes, whereas the thousands of Lebanese that have been killed will remain in their mass graves... Those who describe the tragedy in Lebanon as a victory over the Zionist military machine ignore the blood gushing from the Lebanese body, and the painful scars borne by the Lebanese alone. Victories are not mere slogans, words or foolish statements issued via satellite TV; instead, they are measured on the basis of hard figures, comprising the true loss of lives, property, land and sovereignty."

¶3. On 08/15, columnist Dr. Hasan Madan wrote the following in an editorial in the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"Even before the cease-fire came into effect, some Lebanese and Arab voices were demanding that Hezbollah be held accountable for its actions in abducting the two Israeli prisoners and dragging the country into an unwanted war. And after the cease-fire, these voices are getting louder, at a time when the corpses of the victims are still lying under wreckage and Lebanese blood is still pouring out, all amidst a strong feeling of patriotic dignity felt by Lebanese and Arabs across a wide range of ideologies. The Lebanese fighters showed courage in defending their country... It is a historical achievement, if not a miracle, that Lebanese freedom was able to stand so resiliently against Israeli aggression, while so many other Arab nations remain constrained by their governments from

fighting back or resisting the enemy. At the end of the day, Hezbollah is one of the groups that so valiantly defended Lebanon... Many of those that blame Hezbollah for Lebanon's destruction, as if Hezbollah waged a sectarian or civil war in Lebanon and were not the victims of U.S.-Israeli aggression, wish to punish Lebanon. Who should be held accountable to whom? Shouldn't the resilient Lebanese hold the Arabs accountable for their impotence?"

¶4. On 08/15 the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" published the following in a lead editorial:

"Some ask who has own the war. I say Lebanon. This country, once represented by the Phoenix, will fly again. Such a strong country will not let anyone defeat it or displace its people... There is a difference between the flood of martyrs' blood and the flow of poisonous words. The former stays, while the latter passes. Victory is priceless to those who understand what it means."

QUINN